

Introduction: 2005 Comprehensive Plan for Early Literacy Success

Background and Purpose of the Plan

In 1997, Vermont's Equal Education Act (Act 60) called for the development of a "plan for establishing a comprehensive system of services for early education in the first three grades to ensure that all students learn to read by the end of third grade." Accordingly, such a plan was developed by a collaborative and representative team, and approved by the Vermont State Board of Education in January, 1998. Since that time, the plan served to guide the work of not only the Vermont Department of Education but also of several other partners (agencies and collaborating organizations) engaged in fostering early reading success.

The 1997 Equal Education Act also called for the plan to be updated every five years. Revisions were made in 1999 and also in 2004, and recently a decision was made to simplify and streamline the Plan, and bring it to the State Board of Education for consideration and approval. Our intent is to have the Plan serve as a map for action, an outline of feasible and essential steps and a tool for monitoring steps and strategies undertaken.

Composition of the Drafting Team; Development of the Plan

Those involved in drafting the 2005 Comprehensive plan for Early Literacy Success have included representatives from the Vermont Department of Education, Stern Center for Language and Learning, Vermont READS Institute at University of Vermont, Vermont Department of Libraries, Vermont Center for the Book, University of Vermont, Vermont Humanities Council, Vermont Reading Recovery Consortia, Vermont Council on Reading, Head Start, Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center, public schools and others. These individuals are involved in a wide variety of early literacy efforts, and are knowledgeable about the broad range of current initiatives statewide, including, but not limited to; the Born To Read projects, National Writing Project in Vermont, Never Too Early projects, Vermont Reads Institute, the Red Clover Program and Reading First Grant recipients.

In order to achieve the goal that all children learn to read by the end of third grade, a comprehensive system of services must include not only the first three grades of school but also those preceding years, from birth through kindergarten. A review of research in early literacy and some recent national initiatives support this rationale.

The 2005 Plan is intended to be succinct and include actions that are both truly statewide and essential to reaching the goal of early reading success.

Contents of the Plan

Four types of actions are included:

- standards and assessment
- learning opportunities and instruction
- professional development, and
- technical assistance.

Within *each* area, as appropriate and relevant, specific actions are listed for the following targeted audiences:

- Early care and education professionals (including those serving children from birth through third grade, administrators, and higher education faculty)
- Home, family and community

If the plan is successful, a greater percentage of students will meet the standard on both the Grade 2 Vermont Developmental Reading Assessment (VT-DRA) and the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). The ultimate goal is for all Vermont children to become competent and confident readers.

Comprehensive Plan for Early Literacy Success

	School and Literacy Professionals (Early Childhood Educators, Teachers, Administrators, & IHE Staff)	Home, Family and Community
Standards & Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue DRA and NECAP administration and analysis of data results. 2. Review, identify, and disseminate high quality assessments tied to the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning through network meetings, alternate assessment trainings, etc. 3. Expand use of the Vermont Early Learning Standards for preschool curriculum development and related assessments 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Provide optional GE training and resources for home school families and networks 5. Disseminate <i>Parent Guide to Vermont Early Learning Standards</i>. 6. Disseminate results of statewide early literacy gains to the broader Vermont community.
Professional Development (PD)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Promote assessment to instruction linkages through GE networks and Vermont Early Learning Standards curriculum development trainings 8. Recommend ROPA review teams include individuals with literacy expertise 9. Convene Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) faculty to review current research, assessments, and standards, and to recommend best practices for teacher prep programs and ROPA 10. Equip regional partners with text and media resources 11. Continue statewide professional development, e.g., Reading First Academies, <i>Never Too Early</i>, <i>Building Blocks</i>, <i>VRI at UVM Summer Institute</i> 12. Use Early Childhood State Improvement Grant (SIG) to train new cohorts of early childhood educators <p>Promote high quality PD for core, supplemental and intervention programs, e.g., <i>Time for Teachers</i>, <i>Reading Recovery</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Promote <i>Ready Set Go</i> training for entering Kindergarten parents, emphasis on lowest 25th percentile: VHC 14. Promote Building Blocks (Stern Center) and Read With Me (VHC) 15. Provide public and school librarians with training in early literacy theories and practice 16. Support training to medical students and physicians regarding early reading e.g., Stern Center Med Ed CD, etc.

	Professionals*	Home, Family and Community
Technical Assistance (TA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Support PD and TA that emphasizes links between student data related to performance and program adjustment 18. Provide TA on grant preparation in literacy 19. Promote programmatic assessment of early literacy quality/program design (Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Develop survey for parents to identify a system(s) that would be useful in supporting emerging literacy. 21. Disseminate information about the Comprehensive Early Literacy Plan on the websites of participating agencies and partners.
Learning Opportunities & Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Continue financial support for the Red Clover Program 24. Update and distribute Early Literacy Toolkits to Pre K-3 teachers, administrators, SPED teachers and Educational Services Agencies (ESA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Distribute Mother Goose Cards statewide 26. Promote Vermont Academy of Pediatrics' <i>Reach Out and Read</i> program 27. Disseminate/publicize materials that support transition to school, as well as the underserved population (e.g. <i>Off To Kindergarten Booklet</i>, Vermont ETV's <i>Ready To Learn</i>) 28. Use the State-wide early literacy team to promote collaboration across literacy initiatives and organizations

2007-2008 Early Literacy Grants		
Program	Grantee	Amount Awarded
America Reads	Vermont State Colleges	\$10,000
The Vermont State Colleges will continue to coordinate selected statewide America Reads Reading Partner activities through Community College of Vermont, Castleton State College, Johnson State College and Lyndon State College. Each semester, 3-5 training sessions will be held at various locations throughout the state; students and staff from all the Vermont State Colleges and surrounding colleges can attend, as can community members and partnership organizations such as RSVP. Expert trainers have been identified in each region and will continue to provide training during 2007-2008.		
Everybody Wins!	Everybody Wins! Vermont	\$4,000
During the 2007-2008 reading year, Everybody Wins! Vermont's (EW! VT) Power Lunch will run at 17 sites in 15 communities. This new site, at Barnes Elementary, was made possible with the help of the Burlington School District, which hired a parent-community liaison to run Power Lunch at the school. We also opened two Power Breakfast sites: one at Flynn Elementary in Burlington and one at Barton Graded School.		
We continue to serve 661 student/mentor reading pairs at the following sites by spring 2008: Barre City Elementary; Barton Graded School; Neshobe Elementary (Brandon); Barnes, Edmunds and Flynn elementary schools in Burlington; Bluff Elementary (Claremont, New Hampshire); * Hartland Elementary; * Mary Hogan School (Middlebury); Union Elementary (Montpelier); Shelburne Community School; Tunbridge Central School; * Rutland Intermediate School; West Fairlee Elementary; * Seminary Hill School (West Lebanon, New Hampshire); * White River School; and JFK Elementary (Winooski). Sites marked with asterisks are administered cooperatively with Upper Valley Business and Education Partnership.		
Mother Goose	Vermont Center for the Book	\$5,520
The Mother Goose Program provides early literacy and bibliography cards to parents of children in grades K-3 through the schools. 7,000 literacy cards will be printed and will be mailed this summer for the coming 2007-2008 school year.		
Never Too Early to Read	Vermont Humanities Council	\$18,000
The goal of the <i>NTE</i> program is to develop the professional expertise of childcare providers and to help inform parents so that children in their care gain pre-literacy skills and can learn and grow to become active participants in a literate society. <i>NTE</i> seeks to provide high-quality children's books and techniques for how to use them to providers and care-givers. <i>NTE</i> emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning and professional development and fosters the knowledge, skills, and confidence of providers. <i>NTE</i> programs also help parents become more aware of their role as their children's first teachers		
Reach Out & Read	National Reach Out & Read Center	\$25,000
The mission of Reach Out and Read (ROR) is to make literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care, so that children grow up with books and a love of reading. Pediatricians and early childhood specialists founded ROR in 1989, at Boston City Hospital, now a part of Boston Medical Center. In its eighteenth year, ROR has grown and is now located at more than 2,900 sites (located mainly at pediatric practices, community health centers and hospitals) in all fifty states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Nationally, the program reaches more than 2.5 million children, distributing 4 million, age and culturally appropriate, free books to these children annually. By integrating literacy into standard well-child pediatric visits, medical providers promote the acquisition of spoken and written language skills in young children, thereby increasing the likelihood of eventual school success. Pediatric primary care providers convey to parents the importance of books and reading in their children's lives.		

Ready to Learn	Vermont Public Television	\$9,000
In order to enhance the learning readiness of preschool and early elementary school children, Vermont Public Television (VPT) provides non-violent, commercial-free, educational children's programming to Vermont households. Our goal is to support literacy development and children's readiness to learn. Despite the loss of federal funding for station grants to implement RTL, VPT received a three-year "transition" grant from CPB, hired a new coordinator and kicked off a new program in 2006. RTL continues to provide training and workshops to parents and adults who work with children to increase early literacy.		
Red Clover Award Books	Vermont Center for the Book	\$31,000
The Vermont Center for the Book oversees the Red Clover Award Program, in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Libraries, Windham County Reads, and school librarians and K-4 teachers throughout the state. The Vermont Center for the Book will purchase and send out sets of the top 10 Red Clover Award nominated books to 220 Vermont school libraries for students in Grades K-4 to read and discuss. The students then vote on the books and their selection is then published in an annual Teacher's Guide which is distributed at the annual Red Clover Award Conference. This is a reading-and-discussion experience for all Vermont K-4 students and an annual event in Vermont public schools. Approximately 95% of Vermont elementary schools have incorporated the Red Clover Award Program as part of their school curriculum.		